

Message Text

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65

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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R 111329Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8566

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, LE

SUBJ: CIVAIR AGREEMENT--VISIT BY TMA PRESIDENT ABOU HAIDAR

REF: STATE 23985

1. TMA PRESIDENT MUNIR ABOU HAIDAR CALL ON CHARGE FEB 11
TO DISCUSS CIVAIR AGREEMENT.

2. ABOU HAIDAR MADE LOW-KEY, RATHER CHASTENED APPEAL FOR ONE-
YEAR EXTENSION OF GOL-U.S. CIVAIR AGREEMENT FORMALLY RE-
QUESTED LAST DECEMBER. POINTING OUT THAT MEA WAS NOT AT
PRESENT INTERESTED IN EXERCISING ITS RIGHTS TO THE U.S., HE
STATED THAT LOSS OF TMA RIGHTS IN THE U.S. WOULD CAUSE A SERIOUS
BUT NOT CRIPPLING BLOW TO THE AIRLINE. U.S. TRAFFIC GENERATED
ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF TMA'S REVENUES (OF WHICH ABOUT 35 PER-
CENT FOR ARAMCO). ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE AGREEMENT WERE
CANCELLED, ALTERNATE PLANS WOULD HAVE TO BE INITIATED. IT WAS
IMPORTANT THEREFORE TO HAVE A DEFINITE ANSWER AS QUICKLY AS
POSSIBLE.

3. EMBASSY HEARD ABOU HAIDAR OUT AND AGREED TO BRING HIS CON-
CERN TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION, WITH A REQUEST THAT A
DEFINITE ANSWER BE FORTHCOMING AS SOON AS FEASIBLE.

4. COMMENT:

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A. IN LIGHT OF THE CATASTROPHIC EFFECT OF THE RECENT CIVIL WAR

ON THE LEBANESE ECONOMY WE ARE SOMEWHAT MORE SYMPATHETIC THAN IN THE PAST TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF A SEGMENT OF THAT ECONOMY THAT STILL HAS THE CAPACITY OF CONTRIBUTING TO RAISING THE COUNTRY FROM THE CHAOS IN WHICH IT NOW FINDS ITSELF, FOR WE BELIEVE THAT THE DESIRE OF SEEING A REVIVAL OF WHAT WAS A WESTERN-ORIENTED, LIBERAL ECONOMY IS A LEGITIMATE CONSIDERATION TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN REACHING ANY DECISION BASED ON OVERALL U.S. INTERESTS.

B. IN A NARROWER CONTEXT A FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF COURSE WOULD BE THE CANCELLATION OF PANAM RIGHTS IN LEBANON AND THE EFFECT TO WHICH CANCELLATION OF THESE RIGHTS (ADMITTEDLY NOW OF LESS IMPORTANCE, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT-TERM) WOULD HAVE ON THE OPERATIONS OF THAT COMPANY.

C. WE WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS AS TO WHEN A DECISION MAY BE EXPECTED.

LAMBRAKIS

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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